

MICHIGAN TESTING PROCESS FOR H1N1

Information for the Public

Updated: May 4, 2009

	Actions	Estimated Timeframe
Step 1	A doctor may order what is called a rapid influenza test, which is the same test that is done during a “normal” flu season. There are many different rapid test kits. Each hospital, clinic, or doctor’s office lab makes the decision which one they purchase. Not all labs use the same testing kit, and not all kits use the same type of specimen (nasal swab, throat, etc).	The rapid test can usually be completed in an hour or two.
Step 2	If the patient meets the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s case definition, is considered highly suspect, and is approved for further testing by the local health department, the physician forwards the second swab to the Michigan Department of Community Health Bureau of Laboratories - “the state lab.”	The physician usually ships the specimen “next day”.
Step 3	The state lab performs tests for Influenza A, including tests for the specific subtypes that had been seen during this ‘normal’ flu season.	The influenza testing at MDCH BOL is performed daily. For specimens received by 8a.m., MDCH BOL gives the MDCH Executive the results by 4 p.m.
Step 4	If the state lab testing indicates the presence of Influenza A, but the virus is untypeable (not able to determine if it is H1 of human origin), they forward the sample to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for further testing.	MDCH BOL ships specimens “next day”.
Step 4	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention performs testing that is specific for swine influenza A/H1.	CDC testing is currently taking 72 hours.
Step 5	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports results to the Michigan state lab as soon as possible. The state lab reports the results to the state emergency operations center and the joint information center.	Same day.
Step 6	The Joint Information Center releases the information to the media.	Same day.

* Because the H1N1 is a “novel” virus, the Michigan Department of Community Health does not know whether all of these various rapid influenza testing kits will detect it. As Michigan Department of Community Health gets more data, this will become clearer. During this incident the Michigan Department of Community Health is recommending that a second swab specimen be collected at the same time in case further testing for the H1N1 virus is needed.